The position that Allah has granted the honourable Maulana Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani مدظلہم is very well known to everyone and it reflects Allah's approval of his services to Islam. His writings, sermons and research have benefited Muslims at every level of society.

A collection of his addresses and sermons has been published in Urdu, entitled *Islaahi Khutbaat*. It is a compendium of assorted subjects of Islam, like elementary deeds, rights of Allah and of fellow-men, current issues, disagreements within families, prayers and good manners as taught by the Prophet ﷺ, mutual relations and a host of other topics. In short, this book invites its readers to adorn themselves with good manners and to cure themselves of spiritual maladies.

Darul-Ishaat is also honoured to publish the English translation of this treasury, Discourses on Islamic Way of Life, to cater to the demands of the English speaking people and to enable them to derive full benefit from these lectures. Initially, the same pattern was followed as was adopted in Urdu and each volume contained lectures on diverse topics. However, these volumes are now re-arranged to group together each subject or allied subjects in separate book-form to permit greater benefit to students and seekers of specific information.

However, certain considerations do apply before studying these books.

This collection is not a specific writing of the honourable Maulana. Rather, he had delivered lectures, sometimes extempore and these were recorded and then a transcript was used to publish the Urdu books. The English translation followed next, the source of which is speech and not a written composition.

Though an effort is made in the translation to convey the meaning of the original message, yet possibility of omission or misinterpretation cannot be ruled out. It is nearly impossible to compress all aspects of the original in the translation. Hence, every deficiency, shortcoming or error of interpretation lies on the shoulders of the translator.

The honourable Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani مدظلہم is absolved of that and in no way responsible for that. In such cases, original cassettes should be recoursed to form an opinion.

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- Importance of the Salah and the Correct Way to Offer it
- The Masnun Method of Salah
- The Three Stages of Khushu
- How to Keep Away Thoughts in the Salah
- Consistently Observe the Salah

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extracts from Discourses on Islamic way of Life

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Collection of Speeches
Justice (R) Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani

DARUL-ISHAAT
Karachi-Pakistan.



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IMPORTANCE OF THE SALAH AND THE CORRECT WAY TO OFFER IT[1]

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ نَحْمَدُهٗ وَنَسْتَعِيْنُهٗ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهٗ وَنُؤْمِنُ بِهٖ وَنَتَوَكَّلُ عَلَيْهِ وَنَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنْ شُرُوْرِ اَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّاٰتِ اَعْمَالِنَا مَنْ يَّهْدِهِ اللّٰهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهٗ وَ مَنْ يُّضْلِلْهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهٗ وَ نَشْهَدُ اَنْ لَّآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهٗ لَا شَرِيْكَ لَهٗ وَ اَشْهَدُ اَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا وَ نَبِيَّنَا وَمَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهٗ وَ رَسُوْلُهٗ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ تَعَالٰى عَلَيْهِ وَ عَلٰى اٰلِهٖ وَ اَصْحَابِهٖ وَ بَارَكَ وَسَلَّمَ تَسْلِيْمًا كَثِيْرًا۔ اَمَّا بَعْدُ۔

فَاَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ الرَّجِيْمِ○

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ○

قَدْ اَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ○ الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ فِيْ صَلَاتِهِمْ خٰشِعُوْنَ ○ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُوْنَ○ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِلزَّكٰوةِ فٰعِلُوْنَ○ (سورة المؤمنون: ۱ تا ٤)

اٰمَنْتُ بِاللّٰهِ صَدَقَ اللّٰهُ مَوْلَانَا الْعَظِيْمُ وَصَدَقَ رَسُوْلُهُ النَّبِيُّ الْكَرِيْمُ وَنَحْنُ عَلٰى ذٰلِكَ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِيْنَ وَالشَّاكِرِيْنَ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ۔

First words

The discourse follows the previous in which I explained the first few verses of surah al-Muminun. They describe the qualities that will make a believer prosperous.

Khushu and Khudu

Allah taala mentions the first quality as khushu. Salah is the most important of a believer's tasks. So, Allah taala mentions khushu in salah before the other qualities. Generally, this word is paired with khudu which is to submit one's visible limbs before Allah taala while khushu is to concentrate one's heart towards Allah taala. Both these things are demanded in

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[1] Venue :Jame Masjid Baitul-Mukarram, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Karachi.

salah.

Reality of khudu

It is to bow down. One stands before Allah taala in such a way that all the limbs submit to Allah, there being no negligence and carelessness. But, it is not our reasoning that will tell us what method is proper manners. Rather, we must follow the Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم method. The Prophet said to his sahabah رضى الله عنهم once after the salah:

صَلُّوا كَمَا رَأَيْتُمُونِىْ أُصَلِّىْ

"Offer the salah as you have seen me offer."

Thus, only this method is according to proper manners. There can be no deduction or addition in it.

Teachings of the righteous caliphs

This is why the sahabah رضى الله عنهم were careful to remember the method that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم taught them, they offered salah accordingly and they taught it to the others. The righteous caliphs Umar رضى الله عنه, Uthman رضى الله عنه and Ali رضى الله عنه ruled over more than half of the world. Wherever they went they taught the people the Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم method of salah so that they might offer accordingly.

Proper posture of limbs is khudu

Abdullah ibn Masud رضى الله عنه said to his students:

اَلا أُصَلِّىْ بِكُمْ صَلَاةَ رَسُوْلِ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ؟

"Shall I not offer the salah of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم for you to see?"

Khudu is that all the limbs must behave according to the sunnah which is the first step towards khushu. When a worshipper does that while standing, bowing, prostrating and sitting (in salah), it is the first step towards turning the heart to Allah taala.

Outside thoughts

We often complain that our thoughts wonder about in the salah and we cannot concentrate. One main reason for that is that our salah is not according to the sunnah in its appearance, nor do we care for it. We do not learn or correct over what we

have been doing since childhood. The salah is so important that hundreds of pages are written in the books of fiqh, giving details of each posture from the takbir tahrimah, qiyam, ruku, sajdah to the salutation. But, we have no mind to learn these methods.

The honourable Mufti رحمه الله care

My respected father, Mawlana Mufti Muhammad Shafi رحمه الله used to say in the last days of his life. "Today, it has been sixty years since I have been learning and teaching the Quran and hadith and fiqh and issuing the fatawa. I have no other occupation besides that. In spite of that, I come across situation in salah when I do not know what I should do. So I have to consult a book on salah. This is my condition. But, I see people who have never given a thought to verify if their salah is according to sunnah or not." The reason is that we have no importance of salah in our minds. One must first of all correct the way he offers the salah.

Standing posture

Let me now outline the correct method of offering the salah. I will explain the verses in some other discourse. When one stands for the salah, his entire body must face the qiblah, even the chest. If the chest is not aligned to qiblah for a short while, Allah taala will accept the salah because he does not question minor discrepancies but the salah will lack the light of sunnah because this standing does not conform to sunnah. The toes and, in fact, the whole body must face the qiblah. Actually, it is neither difficult nor painful to do that. It only needs some attention which will make the salah conform to sunnah and it will have khudu and the light and blessing of sunnah.

Forming intention

I must make one thing clear. Intention is the resolve of the heart. It is not necessary to utter the words with the tongue. Many people think it necessary to utter the words with the tongue. They regard it to be fard or wajib, and even delay joining the congregation till they utter out the words of intention whereby they sometimes miss a rakah. Only the intention of the heart is enough.

Takbir Tahrimah

Again, they do not care how they raise their hands for

beginning the salah. The sunnah is that the palms must face the qiblah and the pores of the thumbs must be in line with the earlobes. Any other way is not sunnah and the salah may not be negated but it is not according to sunnah, and will lack light. A little presence of mind will correct it.

Folding hands

The sunnah method of folding hands is to make a circle with the small finger of one's right hand and its thumb and hold the left wrist keeping the three middle fingers on the back of the left hand, folding the hands a little below the navel. This is sunnah and it will fetch the blessing and light too. If a different method is employed, then the salah will not be void but the sunnah would have been neglected.

Recital of the Quran

After folding the hands, he must recite the thana سبحانك اللهم......, surah al Fatihah and another surah. He must recite in a correct manner, with tajweed in proper articulation and pronouncement. It is not difficult to learn this. Only 69 letters are used in the Quran. It is very easy to pronounce them. However, there are between 8 and 10 letters that will have to be practiced, like ث(th), ح (ha), ض(dgard) and ظ (thow). One should practice this before a qari because sometimes, if they are interchanged then the meaning might change. This is not difficult to learn. Only we do not pay attention.

Summary

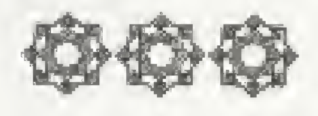
You must go to your neighborhood mosque and practice the letter with the imam there, or the qari if there is one. Insha Allah, your pronunciation of all the letters will improve. Then your salah will conform to sunnah.

Insha Allah, I will say more about these things in another discourse.

May Allah cause us to abide by these things. *Aameen!*

واٰخِرُ دَعْوَانَا اَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ

And our last call be praise be to Allah Lord of the worlds.



THE MASNUN METHOD OF SALAH

(The way the Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم offered it)[1]

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ نَحْمَدُهٗ وَنَسْتَعِيْنُهٗ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهٗ وَنُؤْمِنُ بِهٖ وَنَتَوَكَّلُ عَلَيْهِ وَنَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنْ شُرُوْرِ اَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّاٰتِ اَعْمَالِنَا مَنْ يَّهْدِهِ اللّٰهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهٗ وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلْهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهٗ وَنَشْهَدُ اَنْ لَّآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهٗ لَا شَرِيْكَ لَهٗ وَاَشْهَدُ اَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا وَنَبِيَّنَا وَمَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهٗ وَرَسُوْلُهٗ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ تَعَالٰى عَلَيْهِ وَعَلٰى اٰلِهٖ وَاَصْحَابِهٖ وَبَارَكَ وَسَلَّمَ تَسْلِيْمًا كَثِيْرًا۔ اَمَّا بَعْدُ۔

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

قَدْ اَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ○ الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ فِيْ صَلَاتِهِمْ خٰشِعُوْنَ ○ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُوْنَ ○ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِلزَّكٰوةِ فٰعِلُوْنَ ○ اِلَّا عَلٰٓى اَزْوَاجِهِمْ اَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُهُمْ فَاِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُوْمِيْنَ ○ فَمَنِ ابْتَغٰى وَرَآءَ ذٰلِكَ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْعٰدُوْنَ ○ (سورة المؤمنون: ۱ تا ۷)

اٰمَنْتُ بِاللّٰهِ صَدَقَ اللّٰهُ مَوْلَانَا الْعَظِيْمُ وَصَدَقَ رَسُوْلُهُ النَّبِيُّ الْكَرِيْمُ وَنَحْنُ عَلٰى ذٰلِكَ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِيْنَ وَالشَّاكِرِيْنَ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ۔

Introduction

This is the third discourse on khushu in salah, the first quality of a successful believer as described in the first seven verses of al-Muminun.

We have seen that two words are used together, khushu and khudu. The former implies attention of the heart towards Allah taala while the latter is submission of the limb before

[1] Venue: Jame Masjid Baitul-Mukarram, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Karachi

Allah taala according to sunnah. This discourse takes up the subject from where we had stopped in the previous at recital of the Quran.

Standing posture

This is qiyam. The worshipper stands erect with eyes looking at the spot of prostration. This will mean that the upper limb bends slightly forward. It is disliked to bend it more than that. The back should not bend down for, it is against the sunnah. One stands upright, head slightly bowed to be able to look at the place of prostration.

Motionless

The worshipper should refrain from any kind of movement. The Quran says (in al Baqarah verse 238):

وَقُوْمُوْا لِلّٰهِ قٰنِتِيْنَ۔ (سورۃ البقرۃ: آیت ۲۳۸)

Stand before Allah in total devotion.

Many people are careless in theis regard and they swing backward and forward in their salah, giving motion to their hands to wipe perspiration, etc. All these things are contrary to devotion (*qunut*).

In the presence of the ruler of all rulers

When you stand for the salah, tell yourself that you are before Allah taala. When a person is in the presence of a worldly king, he is careful of his manners and is not inattentive. So, why should he not be careful before the *Ruler of all rulers*. Unnecessary movement in salat is contrary to manners and sunnah. The jurists say that if anyone moves his hand thrice in a single posture without need then his salah stands nullified. This was explained in a previous discourse.

Ruku (bowing)

Bowing follows the standing posture. In bowing, the back must be straight, otherwise, some jurists say the salah is void. The fingers of the hands must be spaced and must grip the knee which too should be straight and firm, not sagging. The more this method is neglected, the more the sunnah is disregarded and there is a proportionate diminishing light and blessing.

The qawmah (standing from ruku)

The worshipper arises from the ruku saying:

سَمِعَ اللّٰهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهٗ

This is the *qawmah*. One of its sunnah is forgotten now a days. It is to keep standing in qawmah for a while but many people do not stand straight preferring to go down into prostration while still half way up. According to a sahabi رضی اللہ عنہ the Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم waited in qawmah for as long as he was in ruku before going down into prostration. Hurrying down is not sunnah.

Supplication

The Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم made this supplication in qawmah:

رَبَّنَا لَكَ الْحَمْدُ مِلْأَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمِلْأَ مَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَمِلْأَ مَا شِئْتَ مِنْ شَيْئٍ بَعْدُ

or

رَبَّنَا لَكَ الْحَمْدُ حَمْدًا كَثِيْرًا طَيِّبًا مُبَارَكًا فِيْهِ كَمَا يُحِبُّ رَبُّنَا وَيَرْضٰى

Thus one must remain in qawmah for at least the time it takes to recite this. If any one hurries down without straightening his back then he must redeem the salah.

An example

While the Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم was in the Masjid Nabawi, a man came and offered the salah. But he hurried through its postures. On finishing it he offered salam to the Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم on going to him. But he said:

وَعَلَيْكُمُ السَّلَام قُمْ فَصَلِّ فَاِنَّكَ لَمْ تُصَلِّ

And peace be on you. Stand and offer the salah (again) for, you have not offered it (correctly)."

He did so, but again it was the same story because that had become his habit. Anyway, he came to the Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم and offered the salam but got the same reply. This happened the third time to, so he requested:

يَـا رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ أرنى وَعَلِّمْنِىْ

"O Messenger of Allah, teach me the correct way."

So the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم taught it to him.

Why did he not teach straight away

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم did not teach him the first time because the man ought to have asked him. Since he did not, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم did not teach him. Thus, if a man does not himself seek to know, it is sometimes useless to teach him. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم waited for him to get the urge to learn.

Offer it peacefully

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم also thought that after such repetitions, he would learn it to remember well. The teaching will be appreciated. So he taught him. When you offer the salah, go through its postures in a correct manner and make the recital in a composed way, and do so, throughout the salah. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم taught him how to offer the salah. The sahabah رضى الله عنهم heard him too and remarked, "Because of this man, we learnt the salah from beginning to end from the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم."

Will have to be repeated

The Prophets صلى الله عليه وسلم instruction to the man to repeat the salah shows that if there is a shortcoming in any of the postures then it is wajib to repeat the salah. Hence, many of us who are not careful about their salah must repeat them and offer correctly. So it is better to be careful from the first. As much time must be given to qawmah as to ruku.

An etiquette of qawmah

One of the sahabah رضى الله عنهم said that sometimes they wondered that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم might have forgotten because he stood too long in the qawmah. Actually, he matched it with the ruku that was also very lengthy. Then he went into prostration. This is one of the manners of qawmah.

Into prostration

First rest the knees on the ground, then the palms, then the nose and after that the forehead. The limb nearest the ground

touches it first. Observe this sequence.

Toes must be well grounded

All these limbs also go into prostration too. They are both the hands, both knees, both feet, the nose and the forehead. They must be well grounded. If the toes do not at all rest on the ground during the prostration then the prostration is not accomplished. The salah too would then be void. But, if the toes do rest on the ground for a moment for the time it takes to say subhan Allah then the prostration and salah would be valid, but it will not conform to sunnah. The sunnah is that the toes must rest on the ground throughout the prostration and their direction should be toward the qiblah. So, even if they are rooted on the ground but are not turned to the qiblah then too the salah is not according to the sunnah.

Prostration nearest to Allah

There is no worship more pleasant than prostration, and there is no other way to attain nearness to Allah taala than prostration. According to a hadith, a man is not as near Allah in any situation as he is in prostration. When he prostrates before Allah taala, his entire body, all his being submits to Allah taala. All the limbs must be bowed down and that must follow the way shown by the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and done by him.

Women must unlock their hair

It is disliked that women should offer salah with their hair locked or lied together though their salah would be valid. The ulama say that if their hair are tied then they would be erect in prostration and not bowed down. If they keep them untied when beginning the salah, the hair too will prostrate, falling downwards. They would benefit from the light and blessings of prostration.

Salah is believers miraj

Allah taala bestowed on the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم the grand rank of miraj that he gave no one else. He reached the place where even jibril عليه السلام could not go. He prayed to Allah taala there for his ummah to be given a similar honour of nearness to Allah taala. Allah taala gave him the gift of salah,

five times a day. They would prostrate during the salah which would bring them near to Allah taala. This is why it is said:

اَلصَّلٰوةُ مِعْرَاجُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ

Salah is the *miraj* of the believers.

We could never hope to ascent the seven heavens into the higher world and up to the sidra tul muntaha. But by virtue of the Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم we are granted the miraj when we prostrate. We must value this thing.

Merit of prostration

When you prostrate your entire being before Allah taala, the whole universe bows to you. When you are in prostration in Allah's taala presence, your feet are on the crown. The universe in wholly under it, Iqbal said:

یہ سجدہ جسے تو گراں سمجھتا ہے ہزار سجدوں سے دیتا ہے آدمی کو نجات

This one prostration gives you riddance from a thousand prostrations. If man were to refuse to make this prostration then he would have been compelled to bow to everyone, the governor, officer, etc. But he who prostrates to Allah taala does not bow before anyone else. So, esteem it and prostrate with love.

The condition

Shah Fadel Rehman Ganj Muradabadi رحمۃ اللہ was a saint of high order. Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمۃ اللہ once visited him. When he was returning, he said to him in low tones. "O Ashraf Ali, I tell you one thing. When I prostrate, it seems that Allah taala loves me."

So, make the prostration with love. It relieves you of a thousand prostrations. It brings you nearer Allah which cannot be achieved in any other way.

Keep elbows apart

The prostration must be made correctly in the way the Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم made. The elbows must be apart from your sides but without causing inconvenience to the man at your either side. To put them very far is against sunnah and hurts the neighbours, so it is not allowed, for it is a grave sin to cause inconvenience to another person. You must recite:

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّیَ الْاَعْلٰی

at least thrice in prostration. You may add to that and recite five, seven, eleven times but in love and esteem.

The jalsah and supplication

The sitting down after the first prostration is called jalsah. One must sit for a while before making the second prostration. According to a sahabi رضی اللہ عنہ the Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم sat for as long as it took him to prostrate. But, ths sunnah too is being abandoned. The Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم made this supplication in jalsah:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اغْفِرْلِیْ ذَنْبِیْ اَللّٰهُمَّ اغْفِرْلِیْ وَاسْتُرْنِیْ وَاجْبُرْنِیْ وَاهْدِنِیْ وَارْزُقْنِیْ

After this the worshipper must make the second prostration.

This was the description of one rakah from the takbir tahrimah to the prostration.

Insha Allah, we will see more in the next discourse. May Allah enable us to offer the salah in accordance with sunnah. *Aameen*!

وَاٰخِرُ دَعْوَانَا اَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ

And our last call be praise be to Allah Lord of the worlds.

THE THREE STAGES OF KHUSHU ❶

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ نَحْمَدُهٗ وَنَسْتَعِيْنُهٗ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهٗ وَنُؤْمِنُ بِهٖ وَنَتَوَكَّلُ عَلَيْهِ
وَنَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنْ شُرُوْرِ اَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّاٰتِ اَعْمَالِنَا مَنْ يَّهْدِهِ اللّٰهُ فَلَا
مُضِلَّ لَهٗ وَ مَنْ يُّضْلِلْهُ فَلَا هَادِىَ لَهٗ وَ نَشْهَدُ اَنْ لَّآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهٗ
لَاشَرِيْكَ لَهٗ وَ اَشْهَدُ اَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا وَ نَبِيَّنَا وَمَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهٗ وَ رَسُوْلُهٗ
صَلَّى اللّٰهُ تَعَالٰى عَلَيْهِ وَ عَلٰى اٰلِهٖ وَ اَصْحَابِهٖ وَ بَارَكَ وَسَلَّمَ تَسْلِيْمًا
كَثِيْرًا۔ اَمَّا بَعْد۔

فَاَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰه مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ الرَّجِيْم
بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ O

قَدْ اَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ O الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ فِىْ صَلَاتِهِمْ خٰشِعُوْنَ O وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَنِ
اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُوْنَ O وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِلزَّكٰوةِ فٰعِلُوْنَ O اِلَّا عَلٰٓى اَزْوَاجِهِمْ اَوْ مَا
مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُهُمْ فَاِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُوْمِيْنَ O فَمَنِ ابْتَغٰى وَرَآءَ ذٰلِكَ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ
هُمُ الْعٰدُوْنَ O (سورة المؤمنون: ۱ تا ۷)

اٰمَنْتُ بِاللّٰه صَدَقَ اللّٰهُ مَوْلَانَا الْعَظِيْم وَصَدَقَ رَسُوْلُهُ النَّبِىُّ الْكَرِيْمُ وَنَحْنُ عَلٰى
ذٰلِكَ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِيْنَ وَالشَّاكِرِيْنَ وَالْحَمْدُلِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ۔

First words

In the previous discourse, we saw that both khudu and khushu are demanded in the salah. The former concern our visible limbs while the latter is linked to our heart. The limbs should be in conformity with the Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم teaching and most of it was covered previously. In this discourse, I speak of the remaining and then take up khushu.

Fingers and toes in ruku and sajdah

The fingers of the hand must be kept apart while grasping

❶ Venue :Jame Masjid Baitul-Mukarram, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Karachi.

the knees in ruku. In sajdah, the fingers must be closed together, unspaced. The hands must be placed with the face between them, wrists near the shoulders and the thumbs opposite the earlobes. The elbows must be away from the ribs not touching them.

Sitting for attahiyat

The right foot must be erect in the sitting posture, its toes turned forward facing the qiblah. The left foot must be laid down for sitting on it. The fingers of the hand must be on the thighs with their tips above the knees, but it is not good to suspend them over the knees.

Salutation

When turning in salam, the neck should be turned fully to the right side with the glance on the right shoulder. Then it should be turned to the left side fully, and the glance on the left shoulder. If these things are observed, the salah shall be according to sunnah. And, because of that the light of sunnah and its blessing will be available. The salah will have khushu in it. Moreover these things do not take much time nor call for strenuous efforts. May Allah taala enable us to do this. *Aameen*!

The fact of khushu

Now, let us turn to khushu. It means the submission of the heart to Allah taala. The worshipper realizes that he stand before Allah taala. The highest rank of it is as described by the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم:

اَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللّٰهَ كَاَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ فَاِنْ لَّمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَاِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ ـ (بخارى ـ باب بدء الوحى)

"That you worship Allah as though you see Him, but if you cannot visualize that, then he sees you." (Bukhari (base wahy), Muslim # 8, Trimdhi # 2619, Abu Dawud # 4695, Ibn Majah # 63, Ahmed 184)

This is the highest form of khushu.

Not necessary to be visible

We do not see Allah taala nor do we observe him seeing us. Then how may we understand these things? The answer is

that there are not all things in this world that we can see but we are convinced at heart that they are present. We can give the example of people hearing someone over the loudspeaker though he is inside the mosque invisible to them. They will confirm that the speaker is there and will identify him by his voice.

Passengers in the aeroplane

Or, for instance, an aeroplane flies overhead. We know that there are passenegers inside though we cannot see them. We know that there also is a pilot flying it, for it cannot fly without a pilot.

Sunlight

We get sunlight in the mosque but do not see the sun yet we are convinced that the sun is there.

Just as the aeroplane can fly only if it has a pilot, so too this wide universe with everything it contains speaks of its Creator.

Everything is evidence of Allah's being

Therefore, the worshipper should, when he stands for salah, tell himself that everything points out to Allah's taala existence and creation, so he also stands before Allah. He should say, "Allah taala sees me. And I am convinced to such an extent that I see him." If you will build this idea in your mind and offer the salah, then you will have a spiritual experience in your salah. May Allah taala grant this kind of experience to every Muslim. This is why the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said that we must offer the salah as though we see him, or he sees us if we cannot do that.

First step are the words

To achieve that highest form of salah, we have to climb up the stairs one by one. Mawlana Ashraf Ali Thanwi رحمه الله said that the first step is to concentrate on the words we utter. We must be aware of what we say, like when we say, الحمد لله رب العلمين. We must know the words. However, today the moment a worshipper begins his salah with Allahu Akbar, it is as though it is the word 'Go' and he speeds through. It is the habit that brings the words on the tongue without effort. The result is that he does not know what he has recited. This is the general picture with us.

First step to khushu

Hence, he must concentrate on his word. This seems difficult in the beginning but Mawlana Thanwi رحمة الله said that it has to be done.

Second step is the meaning

The next step is to concentrate on the meanings. When one says الحمد لله رب العلمين he must know that, All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the worlds; And so to the end of this surah with Allah's attributes of mercy, his being the Master of the day of requital. Then one must know that one confirms one's worship of him and one seeks His help to guide him on the straight path. And when one utters the last verse, one must know that one asks him to guide one on the path of those whom he has favoured, not of those on whom is his wrath or who go astray.

When he does that, he will rid himself of unnecessary thoughts that come to his mind.

Why the distraction

The main reason for such thoughts invading the mind is that ablution is not done properly according to sunnah. People converse while making ablution though this is wrong. They must make the supplication taught by the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. They must come early to the mosque and offer the optional and sunnah salah before the congregation begins because these things are the preface to the fard so that concentration may be built for it. Insha Allah, this will drive away interrupting thoughts.

Return if distracted

However, man's mind is given to stray. So, if he gets an uninvited interrupting thought in spite of these measures then Allah taala will not punish him. But, the moment he realizes that he has strayed, he must (regain his concentration and) return to the salah whenever he is. He must do this exercise every time it happens.

Exercise and effort

Nothing may be achieved in this world without practice and effort. So the same applies here. The worshipper must resolve when he begins the salah that he will concentrate on

the salah whether he recites or is in the ruku. But, every time he stray, he must come back. This practice will make him near perfect and gradually the straying will diminish, Insha Allah. The only thing is that he must not give up. He must keep trying. Try he must all his life. A time will come, Insha Allah, when most of his mind will be in the salah.

Third step thought of Allah

When that is achieved, the next step is to think in salah that Allah taala stands before him. When this is visualized, the objective is achieved, *Insha Allah.*

This is the brief discourse on obtaining khushu to which the Quran refers in the first two verses of al Muminun:

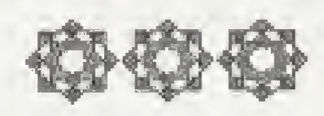
قَدْ اَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ O الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ فِيْ صَلَاتِهِمْ خٰشِعُوْنَ O

These believers who practice khushu in their salah are prosperous.

May Allah enable us to abide by these teachings and to grow khushu in our salah. May he cause us to concentrate and to offer the salah according to sunnah. Aameen!

وَاٰخِرُ دَعْوَانَا اَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ

And our last call be praise be to Allah Lord of the worlds.



HOW TO KEEP AWAY THOUGHTS IN THE SALAH[1]

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ نَحْمَدُهٗ وَنَسْتَعِيْنُهٗ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهٗ وَنُؤْمِنُ بِهٖ وَنَتَوَكَّلُ عَلَيْهِ
وَنَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنْ شُرُوْرِ اَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّاٰتِ اَعْمَالِنَا مَنْ يَّهْدِهِ اللّٰهُ
فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهٗ وَ مَنْ يُّضْلِلْهُ فَلَا هَادِیَ لَهٗ وَ نَشْهَدُ اَنْ لَّآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ
وَحْدَهٗ لَا شَرِيْكَ لَهٗ وَ اَشْهَدُ اَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا وَ نَبِيَّنَا وَمَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدًا
عَبْدُهٗ وَ رَسُوْلُهٗ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ تَعَالٰى عَلَيْهِ وَ عَلٰى اٰلِهٖ وَ اَصْحَابِهٖ وَ بَارَكَ
وَسَلَّمَ تَسْلِيْمًا كَثِيْرًا۔ اَمَّا بَعْد۔

فَاَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰه مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ الرَّجِيْمِ○

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ ○

قَدْ اَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ○ الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ فِیْ صَلَاتِهِمْ خٰشِعُوْنَ ○ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ
عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُوْنَ○ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِلزَّكٰوةِ فٰعِلُوْنَ ○ اِلَّا عَلٰٓى اَزْوَاجِهِمْ
اَوْمَا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُهُمْ فَاِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُوْمِيْنَ○ (سورة المؤمنون: ۱ تا ۷)

اٰمَنْتُ بِاللّٰه صَدَقَ اللّٰهُ مَوْلَانَا الْعَظِيْم وَصَدَقَ رَسُوْلُهُ النَّبِیُّ الْكَرِيْمُ وَنَحْنُ عَلٰى
ذٰلِكَ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِيْنَ وَالشَّاكِرِيْنَ وَالْحَمْدُلِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ۔

Introduction

We continue our commentary on the first few verse of surah al Muminun which describe the believers who are prosperous in both the worlds. Their first quality is:

اَلَّذِيْنَ هُمْ فِیْ صَلَاتِهِمْ خٰشِعُوْنَ○

Who adopt khushu in their salah.

[1] Venue: Jame Masjid Baitul-Mukarram, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Karachi.

Three stages of khushu

There are three stages or steps to attain khushu:

(i) To be attentive to the words spoken by the tongue,

(ii) to concentrate on their meaning, and

(iii) to visualize while offering the salah that one sees Allah taala, or , at least, that Allah taala sees him. These verses alert us that it is not enough to offer the salah but one must try to grow khushu in the salah.

Disturbed by thoughts

Many people complain that they get various thoughts while they offer the salah. There is no point in worrying about it, but it is necessary to adopt ways to remove the difficulty and shortcoming.

Prefaces of the salah

Allah taala has placed certain thing (prefaces) that are done before the salah which is the real end. The worshipper comes to the salah through those things. If he observes them correctly then the distracting thoughts would be diminished.

The first preface: purification

Allah taala has made purification (or taharah) essential before salah. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

مفتاح الصلاة الطهور

"The key to salah is purity."

He also said:

لاتقبل الصلاة بغير طهور

"The salah is not accepted (by Allah) without purity."

Istinja begins purification

Purification begins with istinja or abstersion. It is wajib to make istinja. A person must satisfy himself that he has obtained purity thoroughly. If he feels that even after passing urine drops are likely to follow, then he must wait for them to finish. This is called istibra in juristic language. If he does not obtain a proper purity and his clothes or body have the impurity on them then his thoughts will distract him.

Impurity is cause of thoughts

Allah taala has given peculiarities to everything. Impurity has the characteristic of creating evil thoughts in man. Hence, the first introductory task for salah is to remove impurity (to make istinja).

Ablution

The second introductory task of salah is to make ablution (or wudhu). It is an amazing thing. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "When a man who make ablution washes his face, Allah taala washes off the minor sins committed by the eyes. When he washes his hands, Allah taala washes off the minor sins committed by his hands. When he washes his feet, Allah taala forgives him the sins committed by his feet. The four limbs washed in ablution are generally these four that take him toward sin. Allah taala has arranged for man to be pure of sins before standing for salah. But these are minor sins. The major sins are forgiven only by making repentance.

Ablution washes off sin

It is known about Abu Hanifah رحمة الله that he could see forms of sin in the residual water of a person performing ablution. Allah taala had given him this kashf, or means of disclosure. Anyway, wudhu is instrumental in not only producing outward cleaning but also inward cleansing and riddance from sin.

Which kind of ablution

However, this advantage accrues only when ablution is made in the sunnah way. The Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم habit was to face the qiblah while making ablution. So it is part of manners of ablution. He said بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم before beginning ablution and he never spoke to anyone while performing ablution.

Concentration

The best thing in concentrating while making ablution is that one thinks while washing the limbs that his sins are being washed off. Also, he must not waste water but use only as much as is necessary. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

اياك والسرف وان كنت على نهر جار

"Beware of waste, even if you are at a running river."

Now, the river will not lose any water if you use much, but the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said that even there you must not be wasteful.

Prayers during ablution

One must make prayers while making ablution. When he made ablution, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم recited often:

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَّا إِلٰـهَ إِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُوْلُهُ

and he made this supplication in between:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اغْفِرْلِيْ ذَنْبِيْ وَ وَسِّعْ لِيْ فِيْ دَارِيْ وَ بَارِكْ لِيْ فِيْ رِزْقِيْ

After having performed ablution he made this supplication:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِيْ مِنَ التَّوَّابِيْنَ وَاجْعَلْنِيْ مِنَ الْمُتَطَهِّرِيْنَ

If a person observes these manners while making ablution then it is its characteristic that it removes divergent thoughts from his mind,turns his attention towards Allah taala.

Conversation during ablution

However, we begin to commit mistakes while making ablution itself. We do everything that is wrong. We converse with each other, exchange gossip and are lost elsewhere in thought while discharging our duty in haste. The result is that the fruit and benefit of ablution is lost to us. If, instead of that, we make a proper and careful ablution observing its manners and making supplication then the preface to the salah will be correct.

The third preface

The third preface of the salah is to perform ablution and come to the mosque a little before the congregational salah and offer two rakaat supererogatory salah as Tahiyat ul Masjid and Tahiyat ul wudhu. There is much merit in these two rakaat. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم asked Bilal رضى الله عنه, "O Bilal, during my miraj while I visited paradise, I heard your footsteps ahead of me. Tell me about a deed that you do regularly for which Allah taala has given you this place." He said, "O Messenger of

Allah, I cannot think of any deed other than that I have resolved ever since I embraced Islam that I would surely offer two rakaat after every ablution that I perform. I do that regularly whether it precedes a fard salah or not." The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, This is the deed for which Allah taala has raised you to this station."

When to offer

It only takes a couple of minutes to offer the two rakaat. It is very virtuous to offer the Tahiyat ul Masjid on entering the mosque before sitting down but if he sits down by mistake then he may arise on remembering and offer them.

The fourth preface

Before every fard salah, there are some sunnah salah, both muakkadah (emphasized) and ghayr muakkadah (non emphasized). These sunnah are the fourth preface of salah. There is not as much virtue in offering sunnah salah before Maghrib because we have a command to offer them promptly. However, some ahadith speak of two rakaat before fard of Maghrib.

The four introduce khushu

If the four prefaces are observed and the worshipper begins the fard salah then he will not complain about distracting thoughts. The short gap of fifteen minutes or more between adhan and the congregational salah is given so that these prefaces may be observed. When he begins his fard salah afterwards, Insha Allah, Allah taala will give him khushu and concentration. These prefaces take only a few minutes but they improve our salah and we will gain prosperity.

Ignore the thoughts

If the distracting thoughts continue to pester you then do not worry. If they come to mind on their own then Allah taala forgives that. Some people blame themselves and their salah because of these thoughts. They underestimate their salah because of it.

Value the prostration

These things result from a poor estimation. Allah taala does not like that. These people must appreciate that they are

enabled to offer the salah and to make prostration to Allah taala. Let them thank him for that. How many a people are deprived of this blessing! We are not deprived! It is not anything ordinary. Allah taala has enabled us to present ourselves before him.

قبول ہو کہ نہ ہو پھر بھی ایک نعمت ہے   وہ سجدہ جس کو تیرے آستاں سے نسبت ہے

The opportunity to rest the head before him is itself a great blessing. Be grateful for it. And keep trying but if you fail and distracting thoughts haunt you, make istighfar for that. Repent over it.

After the salah

Abu Bakr Siddiq رضی اللہ عنہ said that a man must do two things after offering the salah. He must say الحمد للہ and استغفراللہ to thank Allah for the opportunity to do good, and to seek forgiveness for not being able to do justice to it.

The Prophet صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم used to say, after making the final salutation of a salah, استغفراللہ three times though he had offered the salah (which is a good thing) and had not committed sin. He made istighfar because, "O Allah, the salah that I ought to have offered presentable to you, I have not been able to do."

Summary

The message is that we should not underestimate this salah nor indulge in egoism. We must be grateful to Allah taala for enabling us to worship him and we must seek his forgiveness for our shortcomings. At the same time we must do our best to improve our salah. We must continue to do it all our lives. Insha Alah, Allah taala will accept it, merciful as he is.

May he cause us to abide by these teachings. *Aameen*!

وَاٰخِرُ دَعْوَانَا اَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ

And our last call be praise be to Allah Lord of the worlds.



CONSISTENTLY OBSERVE THE SALAH[1]

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ نَحْمَدُهٗ وَ نَسْتَعِيْنُهٗ وَ نَسْتَغْفِرُهٗ وَ نُؤْمِنُ بِهٖ وَ نَتَوَكَّلُ عَلَيْهِ وَ نَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنْ شُرُوْرِ اَنْفُسِنَا وَ مِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ اَعْمَالِنَا مَنْ يَّهْدِهِ اللّٰهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهٗ وَ مَنْ يُّضْلِلْهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهٗ وَ اَشْهَدُ اَنْ لَّا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهٗ لَا شَرِيْكَ لَهٗ وَ اَشْهَدُ اَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا وَ نَبِيَّنَا وَ مَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهٗ وَ رَسُوْلُهٗ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ تَعَالٰى عَلَيْهِ وَ عَلٰى اٰلِهٖ وَاَصْحَابِهٖ وَ بَارَكَ وَسَلَّمَ تَسْلِيْمًا كَثِيْرًا– اما بعد!

فَاَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ الرَّجِيْمِ ○

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ ○

قَدْ اَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ○ الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ فِيْ صَلَاتِهِمْ خٰشِعُوْنَ ○ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُوْنَ ○ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِلزَّكٰوةِ فٰعِلُوْنَ ○ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِفُرُوْجِهِمْ حٰفِظُوْنَ ○ اِلَّا عَلٰٓى اَزْوَاجِهِمْ اَوْ مَامَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُهُمْ فَاِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُوْمِيْنَ ○ فَمَنِ ابْتَغٰى وَرَآءَ ذٰلِكَ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْعٰدُوْنَ ○ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِاَمٰنٰتِهِمْ وَ عَهْدِهِمْ رٰعُوْنَ ○ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَلٰى صَلَوٰتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُوْنَ ○ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْوٰرِثُوْنَ ○ الَّذِيْنَ يَرِثُوْنَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ○ (سورة المومنون: ١-١١)

اٰمَنْتُ بِاللّٰهِ صَدَقَ اللّٰه مولانا العظيم وَ صَدَقَ رَسُوْلُهُ النَّبِيُّ الْكَرِيم و نَحْنُ عَلٰى ذٰلِكَ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِيْنَ وَالشَّاكِرِيْنَ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ

[1] Venue: Jame Masjid Baitul-Mukarram, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Karachi.

First words

This is one of the discourses on the *surah al-Muminun* whose initial verses describe the qualities necessary for the success of a believer. This last discourse on the *surah* is on the verses {9 to 11}.

وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَلٰى صَلَوٰتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُوْنَ O أُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ

الْوَارِثُوْنَ O الَّذِيْنَ يَرِثُوْنَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ O

They are those who observe *salah* consistently and they are heirs of *al-Firdaws* where they will abide forever. *Al-Firdaws* is a high station in Paradise.

All characteristics in one perspective

Let us review these characteristics together. Those believers are successful who have these qualities:

1) They observe humility in their *salah*.
2) They abstain from every thing that is vain.
3) They observe the *zakah* which means that they pay the *zakah* that is due on them and purify their character.
4) They purify their character of bad habits.
5) They guard their private parts except from their wives and their female slaves who were kept in the olden times. They keep their sexual desires in check except with their wives and female slaves and they are not blamed if they uses them. Those who seek other ways are transgressors and are criminals in Allah's taala sight.
6) They are faithful to their trusts and do not commit treachery in what is entrusted to them.
7) They honour their promises.

We have thrown a detailed light on all these attributes and praise belongs to Allah for that.

Similarity in the first and the last quality

Allah taala mentions the eighth and the last quality وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَلٰى صَلَوٰتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُوْنَ Those believers are successful who observe their salah consistently. The noble *Quran* has mentioned the eight qualities that make a successful believer, beginning with *salah* and ending with it. They are humble in their *salah* or observes humility therein, and they are consistent in their *salah*. These are respectively the first and the last characteristics. This suggests that the important way to gain success is through the *salah*. While elaborating on the first characteristic, we had described *khushu* or humility, humbleness.

Punctuality of time

Observing the *salah* implies many things. One must be consistent and regular, not offering it now and then. The second meaning is to be careful of the hours of *salah*. Allah taala has bound the *salah* to their hours. He says in surah *an-Nisa* verse 103 إِنَّ الصَّلٰوةَ كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ كِتٰبًا مَّوْقُوْتًا. *salah* is duty imposed by Allah for which He has appointed the hours. *Fajr* is from dawn till sunrise, *Zuhr* from end of declination of the sun till when shadows are twice in length, and from then till sunset is Asr. There is a time duration for every *salah* so, it is not merely to observe the *salah*. But also to respect its hours.

The salah of the hypocrite

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "It is the hypocrite's *salah* that when it is the time of the *Asr*, he sits unconcerned till the sun is at the edge (when it turns yellowish and can be seen with the naked eye and at this hour the *salah* is disliked). He gets up hurriedly and goes through four pecks and finishes the *salah*." This is the hypocrite's *salah*. Hence, it is not that only the *salah* is offered and the obligation is thus discharged, but the hour must be respected. The *Fajr salah* must be offered before sunrise when its time ends, but if anyone over sleeps and gets up after sunrise and offer the *salah* then he has redeemed it but has not observed it consistently because he was not careful of the hours prescribed by Allah taala.

Religion is obedience to Allah taala

I have repeated very often that, religion is the word for obedience to Allah.' It is not the question of an appointed hour but merely the command of Allah taala to observe a *salah* at a particular hour and another later. Thus, if anyone offers the *Fajr salah* when the sun is rising then that is forbidden. *Salah* must be offered within the prescribed time.

With the congregation

The third thing that is necessary for a consistent observation is to offer *salah* in its perfect method. This means that men must go to the mosque and offer the *salah* with the congregation; it is *sunnah muakkadah* (emphasised sunnah) for men to join the congregation and this approaches the *wajib* (obligatory). Some *ulama* hold that it is *wajib* to offer the *salah* in congregational form. But, Imam Abu Hanifah رحمة الله held the former view. If a man offers the *salah* by himself then it is an incomplete observation, *ada qasir*. But *ada Kamil* (perfect observation) is that a man offers the *salah* with the congregation. Besides, the degree of a congregation *salah* is higher in terms of merit and reward. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "Offering a *salah* with the congregation fetches twenty-seven times higher reward than offering it by oneself." A few minutes more will be spent in the mosque. How foolish it is to miss the congregation for those few minutes and, make it incomplete. Men must go to the mosque.

Waiting for the salah

Allah taala has made the mosque His house. If a man sits in the mosque waiting for a *salah* then Allah taala goes on giving him reward of *salah*. He gets the same reward as is given or offering the *salah* even if he does nothing but merely sit. His record of deeds is continuously credited. So to observe *salah* consistently is to offer it with the congregation.

Put their houses on fire

When the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم led the *salah* as an *imam*, in the *Masjid Nabwi*, all the *sahabah* رضى الله عنهم اجمعين offered the *salah* in his leadership. But some people, resembling the hypocrites, did not join the congregation. They did not have faith in their heart but only professed it orally, so they made lame excuses for neglecting the congregation. However, it could never be imagined that any *sahabi* would do so. One day, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "I got the thought that I should ask someone else to lead the *salah* and begin it, while I should go to houses and see who is there not attending the congregation. I wish that I should set their homes on fire."

Advantages of the congregation

Fathom the importance of the congregational *salah* from these words of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. The *muadhdhin* calls but this man sits home. May Allah taala preserve every Muslim from the Prophet's صلى الله عليه وسلم anger. *Aameen*. Those who sit home and fail to attend the congregation must think of these words. Allah taala has made the mosque His House and a center for the Muslim *ummah*. When the Muslims meet, they discuss their problems and ask their welfare.

Do not imitate Christianity

The idea that has grown in us that we will go to the mosque only on Fridays and keep away from it all the week is an imitation of Christians. The Christians went to the church on Sunday but now they do not go there on Sunday too. In Europe and the us; the churches are now empty and deserted. Any way, *salah* is fard everyday of the week five times a day and must be offered in the mosque.

Women must offer the salah in the initial hour

The women are told that as soon as the time begins, they must offer the *salah* . Generally, they procrastinate and waste much time and finally offer the *salah* when the disliked hour is on. The men must go to the mosque.

The importance of salah

Allah taala described His successful slaves beginning the description with the *salah* and ending it with it. The most important duty of a believer is the *salah* .

Umar رضى الله عنه ruled over more than half the world. Today rulers of minor governments think very high of themselves and call themselves 'king' and so on. There are as many as fifteen independent states that add up to the area under Umar's رضى الله عنه rule. He wrote a letter to each of his governors. It is to be found in *Muwatta Imam Maalik* (Kitab us-salah hadith # 6)

ان اهم امــــر كم عندى الصلاة فمن حفظها و حافـــظ عليها حفظ

دينـــــــه و مـــــن ضيعها فهو لما سواها اضيع (موطا امام مالك، كتاب

وقوت الصلاة حديث نمبر٦)

"Know that the most important of your task is the salah. He,

who is careful of his salat and consistent with it, preserve his religion. He who neglects the salat will neglect other things more than that."

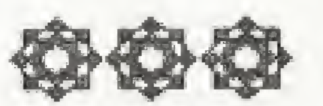
Inheritors of al-Firdaws

The *Quran* begins the description with mention of the *salah* and ends it with it. After recounting the eight characteristics, the *Quran* says that these people are inheritors of paradise. They will dwell therein forever

May Allah taala be merciful to us and grant all of us all these attributes and then through His mercy admit all of us to paradise. *Aameen*

وَاٰخِرُ دَعْوَانَا اَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ

And our last call be, praise be to Allah, Lord of the world



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